



AXE FACTS

INFO for Owners of Roland & BOSS Guitar Products Volume V/ No. 1



5 MINUTES

with Steve Plunkett

Steve Plunkett has spent the better part of his life in the music biz—first as the singer/songwriter for '80s hard rock band **Autograph** and then as a hit songwriter and producer for artists including **John Secada, Graham Nash, James Ingram, Edgar Winter, and David Hasselhoff**. Steve's latest role is as music coordinator for HBO's Emmy Award-winning animated hit series **Happily Ever After**, which features modern reworkings of classic fairy tales using a range of superstar actors and musicians such as **Cyndi Lauper, En Vogue, George Clinton**, etc. Steve has co-produced 26 songs for the series—ranging from country to hard rock to hip-hop. *Axe Facts* recently dropped in on Steve to get some insight.

AF: So you've been recording a lot of different types of music. From a guitar perspective, how well versed are you in these various styles?

SP: I'd say I'm slightly versed in everything [laughs]. But that's where the GT-5 comes in as a very handy tool. Because I'd be working on a lot of different sounds and songs simultaneously. For example, I did a track for **Edgar Winter** which was a total '70s hard rock thing, and

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NAMM News '99

The Roland/BOSS exhibit at the recent Winter NAMM show offered some radical new music products and exciting technologies, not to mention lots of great jamming from the most skilled players around. Here's a break-down of the new Roland/BOSS guitar products premiered at the show.

GT-3 Guitar Effects Processor
The GT-3 Guitar Effects Processor takes 32 classic and cutting-edge BOSS guitar effects



and an ultra-flexible COSM-based preamp and places them in a sturdy, compact pedalboard with an ultra-affordable price

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THE HISTORY OF GR GUITAR SYNTHESIZERS

Part Five in a Six-Part Series

by Peter Swiadon

The Roland GR-50 Guitar Synthesizer finally showed the world that guitar synths could really track well (but, unfortunately, that they could also be really complex). In 1992, Roland released the groundbreaking GR-1, proving that great-tracking guitar synths could also be very easy to use, and could be played live.

The GR-1 marked a return to the floor-unit format for Roland guitar synths. This made it very easy for guitarists to control, since it used footpedals for many functions—a natural fit for guitarists. It also featured another guitarist-friendly feature: knobs for realtime sound control. These knobs made the GR-1 a favorite for guitar players who didn't want to become programmers. It also marked a great

advance in sound by incorporating Roland's RS-PCM sound technology, which enabled the GR-1 and other Roland synths to create very realistic sounds. The GR-1 also was the first and only Roland guitar synthesizer to contain a

sequencer, so guitarists finally had access to all the synthesis and MIDI technologies that previously had been available only in keyboards. Like many higher-end keyboard synths,

the GR-1 was even expandable with an optional expansion board, which gave it a total of 400 onboard sounds. The GR-1 seemed to be the ideal guitar synth solution to many guitar players, and it became Roland's most successful guitar synth to date in 1992.

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at the same time I was doing a country thing for **Loretta Lynn** and a jazz thing for **Ertha Kitt**. But using the GT-5, I could go between all those different styles just by changing settings. I mean I'll go to the "Fat Crunch" Patch for **Edgar Winter**, and then I'll go to one of my own settings which sounds like a [clean tube combo] with a little vibrato for the country stuff.

AF: So how else were you using the GT-5, specifically?

SP: Well, recording direct, obviously, using the amp models inside, and also using it with some outside gear—some good compressors and stuff... And there's something about the GT-5 with bass. I don't know how many people are using it that way, but I've developed some great bass settings using some light compression and some really nice fat EQ. I just store it and call it up and it always sounds great.

AF: Cool. What about the actual effects?

SP: I use the rotary sound on guitar and also on my keyboard parts because it's hooked up to the [GT-5's onboard] expression pedal. It's one of the best simulated [rotary speaker] sounds I've seen, because you can change the speed of the

rotary effect with the pedal. A lot of Leslie™ simulators only give you fast or slow. For guitar, I use [the rotary effect] to get that early Clapton sound. It's got some grit in there when you put a little distortion on it. It's just a real cool sound, especially in stereo. Another sound that's awesome in there which I use in stereo for the R&B

"I did a track for Edgar Winter which was a '70s hard rock thing, and at the same time I was doing a country thing for Loretta Lynn and a jazz thing for Ertha Kitt. Using the GT-5, I could go between all those different styles just by changing settings."

stuff is "Rhodes Pan." It's like a ping-pong, back-and-forth panning which sounds great.

AF: Why were you drawn to the GT-5 as a recording tool?

SP: The GT-5 is just really fast to work with, for guitar or effects on vocals or whatever. I don't even take my amps out anymore. Especially working in TV and movies, there's always a time pressure. Who's got time anymore? You'd have to have like ten different amps to do all this stuff. So this just really speeds things up and sounds great.

AF: Are there any GT-5 tips you want to share with our readers?

SP: Well, one thing I found helpful

on a lot of the GT-5's sounds is messing with the onboard EQ. Because every set of speakers is different. And depending on what you're monitoring on, you can really use the midrange section of that EQ to smooth out your crunch on your rock sounds. It's parametric and that let's you find what's missing in your sound to fill out your mix. It's like having a bit of "glue" to keep things together... Some of the stuff I do for [hit television show] Beverly Hills 90210 is much more rock and alternative rock-based and I'll take some guitar solos here

and there. Lately, what I've been doing on the solos for that type of music is just to have the music playing and start scrolling [through GT-5 sounds] right before I take the solo—not knowing the sound I'm looking for. I'll usually hit upon something that may not be it at first, but leads me to more wacky, left-field weird kind of sounds that I may not have thought of initially. Who knows what you're going to come up with? With an amp, you've only got one or two sounds. So this is a cool way to do it. It's a great approach.

Catch Steve Plunkett's music on television shows like Beverly Hills 90210, Seventh Heaven, Melrose Place, HBO's Happily Ever After and the upcoming CBS mini-series All I Have to Do is Dream.

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While the GR-1 addressed many of the needs of guitarists interested in synthesis—and was very successful by any measure—\$1,500 was still a lot to spend for guitar players used to \$300 guitars and amps. Roland wanted to offer a guitar synth that could perform like the GR-1, but could be available at a much lower price. This desire led to the next member of the GR-Series synthesizers: the GR-09.

By keeping all the valuable performance features of the GR-1 in the GR-09—like great RS-PCM sounds and lightning-fast, accurate



tracking—but leaving out the sequencer, many of the knobs, and the drum sounds, Roland was able to offer the GR-09 at a price that was two-thirds of the price of the GR-1, making it the lowest-priced guitar synth ever. It had much in common with GR-1: the same synth engine and sound quality, a

similar floor-unit format with footpedal operation, and expandability via optional expansion board. There were certain changes: the GR-1 had an alpha-numeric display, so Patches could be named instead of just numbered, for example, while the GR-09 used a three-digit numerical display. But with its low price, the GR-09 became very popular with both gigging and recording guitar players, and was the guitar synth of choice until the incomparable GR-30 came along in 1996.

Next issue: The latest (and greatest) Roland guitar synth: the GR-30!

TIPS & TRICKS

Holding Chords on Your GR-30

Many GR-30 owners don't know that you can hold chords on your GR-30 while you play over the top. It's a simple Hold function, called SOS (short for "sostenuto"), and it lets you play the GR-30 and your guitar at the same time. You can assign it to any Patch, so if you wanted the GR-30 to hold fat classic organ chords while you rip some blues licks, just set Hold for "SOS," stomp on the hold pedal, and you're good to go. The chord will hold as long as you hold the pedal down.



GT-3 Auto-Riff



The new BOSS GT-3 has a wild new effect called Auto-Riff. This "world's first" effect can create a series of notes, or riffs, just by playing one note. You can program in your own riffs and trigger them instantly, and you can even control how fast the riff will play back using the built-in expression pedal. Not only that, but Auto-Riff also has a Hold feature. Using Hold, it's possible to trigger a riff, hold it, and play along with it. The musical possibilities are endless! Check this feature out at your local dealer. Or get FaxBack document #10360 by calling (323) 890-3780.

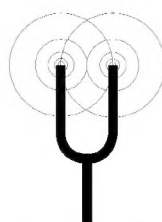
J C-120 Triple Threat



Did you know that it's possible to use Roland's classic J C-120 Jazz Chorus amp with three instruments at the same time? A J C-120 has two separate input channels, each with its own volume and tone controls. In addition, it has a stereo effects return, which can be used for synth inputs, or a guitar preamp input, or anything else. So it is possible to have, for example, one guitar in one channel, a second guitar in the second channel, and your guitar synth, keyboard, or even line mixer into the stereo returns of the amp—all at the same time. Want more info? Get FaxBack document #10011 by calling (323) 890-3780.

Perfect Pitch for Your Guitar?

This one's going to sound hard to believe, but it's true: by using a Roland VG-8EX, a guitar can stay in tune even when it's not in tune! The VG-8EX has an internal pitch-correction feature which can control the pitch and tuning of its sounds—even if the guitar you're playing goes out of tune. To activate the pitch correction function, just push the F4 button twice to access the Auto-tune screen. Now you'll always be in tune!



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tag. The GT-3's massive effects firepower includes eleven overdrive/distortion modes, an Auto-Riff feature which can trigger complete riffs from a single note, a Pickup Simulator which makes your single-coils sound like humbuckers or vice-versa, a wild Slicer effect which chops your guitar sound into rhythmic patterns, a new Feedbacker effect and much, much more.

VS-840EX Digital Studio Workstation



With the affordable new VS-840EX Digital Studio Workstation, Roland's guitar-oriented, hard-disk based songwriting workstation gets some major new features, including powerful new guitar and bass effects, easier operation, a new guitar tuner and a new internal Zip@250 drive. Better yet, all these enhancements—including the new drive—are available to current VS-840 owners through a convenient hardware/software upgrade.

DB-500 D-Bass Amplifier

The DB-500 combines Roland's new FFP digital amplifier technology with COSM sound modeling to deliver a surprisingly loud and dynamic bass amp with big, bold tube, tube overdrive, and solid state tones. Thanks to its digitally-controlled design, this amp can deliver its powerful bass tone in a surprisingly compact and lightweight package, complete with D-Chorus effects, compression and specially tailored EQ which can be stored and recalled in an instant with a footswitch.





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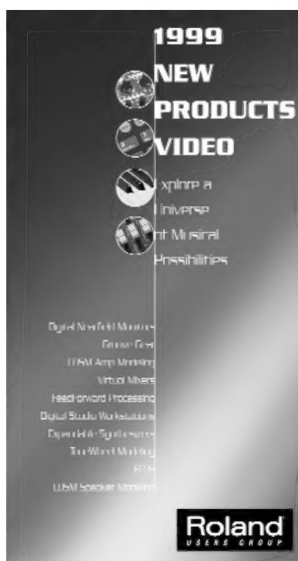


Free 1999 New Products Video!

Explore A Universe Of Musical Possibilities In About An Hour

The FREE Roland Users Group 1999 New Products Video is your introduction to some of the most innovative guitar products and groundbreaking music technologies ever introduced.

Covering more than 35 new products, this video is your guide to everything Roland unveiled at the recent Winter NAMM Show in Los Angeles. You'll get new product descriptions, demonstrations and all-out jams featuring a variety of stellar musicians.



And the products? We're talking about everything from the new GT-3 Guitar Effects Processor to the VS-840EX Digital Studio Workstation to the DB-500, the world's first digitally controlled bass amp. And there's more—much more!

So if you want to get a sneak peak at the new Roland products on their way to stores over the next few

months, the 1999 New Products Video is a must-see. Best of all, it's FREE. Just call the Roland SuperStore at (800) 386-7575 and order your copy today.